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Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05
COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EGEN, UNGA, ECOSOC
SUBJECT: THE RESUMED 31ST GA AND THE ROLE OF THE UN IN NEGOTIATIONS ON THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM

1. THE RESUMED SESSION OF THE 31ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY CLOSED WITHOUT AGREEMENT OR ANY ACTION ON THE G-77 DRAFT RESOLUTION. ONE OF ITS MAJOR THEMES, THE EVALUATION OF THE RESULTS OF CIEC, IS UNLIKELY TO ARISE AGAIN EXCEPT PERHAPS IN SOME GENERAL DEBATE STATEMENTS. ANOTHER THEME, WHICH COMPRISED THE BULK OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION AND WHICH WAS REITEREATED IN THE CLOSING PLENARY STATEMENT OF THE G-77 CHAIRMAN (AKHUND OF PAKISTAN), IS THE ROLE IN NORTH/SOUTH ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF THE UN SYSTEM -- AND OF THE GA IN PARTICULAR. THE MISSION EXPECTS THIS THEME WILL BE THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE FOR THE G-77 IN THE SECOND COMMITTEE AT THE 32ND UNGA. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE SINCE WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE ANY MAJOR MOVEMENT ON THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE TO THEM (E.G. DEBT, COMMON FUND).

2. THE SAME ISSUE OF THE ROLE OF THE UN SYSTEM UNDERLIES THE WORK OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON RESTRUCTURING, WHICH IS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RAPIDLY COMING TO A HEAD. THIS EXERCISE, WHICH DERIVES DIRECTLY FROM THE WILL TO MAKE GREATER AND MORE EFFICIENT USE OF THE UN'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECTORS, PROVIDES A PARTICULAR OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO INFLUENCE THE MANNER IN WHICH THE UN SYSTEM WILL PLAY ITS ROLE IN THE NORTH/SOUTH RELATIONSHIP.

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3. SUBSUMED UNDER THIS THEME OF THE UN'S ROLE, AS IT WAS
IN THE RESUMED 31ST SESSION, IS THE G-77'S DETERMINATION TO
TEST THE MEANING OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO
CHANGE. TESTS WILL TAKE DIFFERENT FORMS IN DIFFERENT FORA.
IN THE SECOND COMMITTEE A MAJOR PIECE OF LITMUS PAPER WILL BE
PRECISELY THIS QUESTION OF THE UN AND UNGA ROLE IN THE
NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE. AMBASSADOR YOUNG MADE A GNERAL
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE CENTRAL ROLE OF THE UN AND UNGA IN
HIS ECOSOC ADDRESS. ALL ELEMENTS OF THE G-77 WILL WANT
TO SEE HOW WE TRANSLATE THIS INTO REALITY. THE RADICALS
MAY TRY TO PUSH AN EXTREME ROLE WITH A VIEW TO CON-
FRONTATION. THE MODERATES, WHO CURRENTLY SEEM TO BE IN
CONTROL OF THE 77, WILL NEED SOMETHING CONCRETE AS EVIDENCE
OF THE VALUE OF DIALOGUE.

4. IN LOOKING BACK OVER THE RESUMED 31ST UNGA, THE MISSION
IS DISTURBED BY THE FACT THAT WE APPEAR TO BE SENDING OUT
CONFLICTING SIGNALS ON THIS QUESTION. AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S
REMARKS CONTRAST MARKEDLY WITH OUR STANCE ON ACTUAL TEXTS
IN WHICH WE TOOK PAINS TO AVOID THE IMPLICATION OF AN
INCREASE IN THE AUTHORITY AND IMPORTANCE OF THE GA OR THE
PRIMACY OF THE UN SYSTEM.

5. IN THE UN, WORDS CAN EVOKE IMPORTANT EMOTIONAL
REACTIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE UN CHARTER REFERS TO
"RECOMMENDATIONS" BY THE GA AS OPPOSED TO "DECISIONS"
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BY THE SECURITY COUNCIL. THE WORD "RECOMMENDATIONS"
IS ANATHEMA TO THE G-77, WHO SEE IT AS
CODIFYING THE IMPOTENCE OF THE BODY IN WHICH THEY HAVE THE
GREATEST INFLUENCE. THEIR TALK OF "GUIDELINES,"
STRIKES RAW NERVES IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND PRODUCES AN
IMAGE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S SOMEHOW TAKING OVER AND RUNNING
THE IMF, IBRD, THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES, ET AL. SIMILARLY,
"NEGOTIATIONS" CONJURES UP IN OUR MINDS THE GA'S
ACTUALLY WORKING OUT DETAILED AGREEMENTS, A LA GATT,
WHEREAS "DISCUSSIONS" IMPLY TO THE G-77 THE IMPORTANCE OF
A HIGH SCHOOL DEBATE.

6. WE HAVE IN THE PAST MANAGED TO PAPR OVER THESE SEMANTIC
PROBLEMS. WE MIGHT CONTINUE TO DO SO. BUT, IN THE CONTEXT OF
OF THE 32ND GA, THIS CAN ONLY BE AT THE RISK OF CONFIRMING THE
VIEW OF THE G-77 RADICALS THAT THE U.S. ATTITUDE TOWARD THE UN ON
ECONOMIC ISSUES HAS, INDEED, NOT CHANGED WITH THE NEW
ADMINISTRATION.

7. AS THE MISSION SEES IT, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY AT THE
MOMENT IS COUCHED IN ESSENTIALLY NEGATIVE TERMS. THAT IS,
WE ARE WILLING TO ACKNOWLEDGE A SIGNIFICANT UNGA ROLE ON

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NORTH/SOUTH ECONOMIC QUESTIONS, PROVIDED THAT --

A. THIS DOES NOT EXPLICITLY EXCLUDE THE HANDLING OF ECONOMIC QUESTIONS OUTSIDE THE UN SYSTEM WHEN PRACTICABLE AND MUTALLY AGREEABLE; AND

B. THE UNGA NOT TRY TO PRESCRIBE SOLUTIONS ON NEGOTIATING MODALITIES RELATIVE TO PROBLEMS UNDER DISCUSSION IN OTHER BODIES, WHETHER OR NOT IN THE UN SYSTEM.

8. THE MISSION IS IN FULL AGREEMENT WITH THESE FUNDAMENTAL POINTS. WE ALSO FEEL THAT, IN THE CURRENT UN ATMOSPHERE, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE CONSIDER HOW BEST TO SUPPORT THIS POLICY WITHOUT BEING OBLIGED TO ASSUME AN UNNECESSARILY
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NEGATIVE POSITION. THE CASE OF THE RESUMED 31ST UNGA DEMONSTRATES THE PITFALLS.

9. OUR APPROACH IN THE RESUMED 31ST GA SUGGESTS A "WORST CASE" APPROACH TO LANGUAGE, I.E. WE HAD READ INTO AMBIGUOUS LANGUAGE THE WORST POSSIBLE MEAING FOR U.S. POLICY AND INSISTED ON EXPLICIT ASSURANCES FOR OUR POSITIONS. HENCE, WHILE THE G-77 CONCEDED THAT DESIGNATING THE UN SYSTEM AS THE "MOST APPROPRIATE" FORUM (PREAMBULAR PARAGRAPH 7 OF G-77 DRAFT) DID NOT EXCLUDE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, WE REQUIRED EXPLICIT LANGUAGE REFERRING TO OTHER BODIES TO ENSURE THAT FUTURE MEETINGS ELSEWHERE MIGHT NOT BE PRECLUDED, EVEN THOUGH SUCH FUTURE MEETINGS WERE NOT, AND INDEED COULD NOT, BE SPECIFIED. WE FOUND THE AMBIGUOUS AND GENERAL REFERENCES TO "GUIDELINES" AND "NEGOTIATIONS" IN OPERATIVE PARA-GRAPH 8 UNACCEPTABLE, LEST THEY ADMIT TO AN INTERPRETATION CONTRARY TO OUR POLICY THAT NEGOTIATIONS ON SPECIFIC ISSUES REMAIN IN THE VARIOUS FUNCTIONAL FORUMS. (OPERATIVE PARAGRAPH 9, CALLING FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO "FIND SOLUTIONS" TO QUESTIONS DISCUSSED ELSEWHERE, WAS, OF COURSE, EXPLICITLY AT VARIANCE WITH U.S. POLICY.)

10. THE MISSION IS NOT ATTEMPTING TO PREJUDGE THE ACCEPTA-BILITY, IN TERMS OF OUR STATED POLICIES, OF LANGUAGE THAT MAY BE PROPOSED IN THE FUTURE. THE PURPOSE OF THIS MESSAGE, RATHER, IS TO FLAG A LARGELY SEMANTIC AND EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS WHICH, IF NOT HANDLED CAREFULLY, COULD ENDANGER OUR LARGER OBJECTIVES IN THE NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE. WHILE AMBIGUOUS LANGUAGE MAY NOT CONSTITUTE AN IRON-CLAD GUARANTEE AGAINST FUTURE EVENTUALITIES, AN EXCESSIVELY RIGID POSITION RUNS THE RISK OF BEING INTERPRETED AS OBSTRUCTION AND RETREAT FROM OUR GENERAL POSTURE.

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12. IN THE MISSION'S VIEW, A DECISION ON THE ENTIRE QUESTION OF THE UN'S ROLE IN THE NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE SHOULD BE TAKEN WITHOU FURTHER DELAY -- AND AT SENIOR LEVELS. THE G-77 WILL NOT DELAY IN SUBMITTING NEW PROPOSALS IN THIS AREA. WE PROPOSE A MEETING CHAIRED BY UNDER-SECRETARY COOPER, WITH APPROPRIATE REPRESENTATION FROM IO, EB, TREASURY, NSC STAFF, AND OTHER INTERESTED AGENCIES, AND AMBASSADOR WELLS TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION THOROUGHLY WITH A VIEW TO REACHING AGREEMENT ON A USG APPROACH.
YOUNG

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